Housing and Public Health Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee of South Norfolk Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 23 February 2015 at 10.00am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors L Neal (Chairman), N Legg, T Palmer and S Thomson

Apologies: Councillors K Smith, G Walden and N Ward

Officers in Attendance: The Housing & Public Health Manager (M Swann), the Housing Access and Standards Manager (T Cooke), the Early Intervention Manager (M Pursehouse), the Independent Living Team Leader (S Cayford), the Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer (K Mitchell) and the Project Manager Environment & Housing (T Durell)

58 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following member declared an ‘other’ interest in the matter listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minute No.</th>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Reason for Declaration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>T Palmer</td>
<td>Board Member of Saffron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Member of Diss CAB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 10 November 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
GOOD NEWS STORIES

a. Health & Wellbeing Week  
The Housing & Public Health Manager advised members that South Norfolk Council staff had participated in a ‘Health & Wellbeing Week’ at the end of January 2015. He explained that the Council was keen to demonstrate, by example, the work being delivered by the Fit4Work initiative which promoted health and fitness within the workplace.

b. Funding Bids Update  
Members were given a brief update on bids put forward by the Council to raise funding from external sources. The Committee was pleased to note that many successful bids had been achieved including Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods, Green Deal, Vanguard, funding from Public Health and the South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group (SNCCG) and Our Place Funding, all of which had resulted in further monies coming into the Council.

c. Affordable Housing Update  
The Committee was advised that 39 affordable homes had been completed within the last quarter and that at a recent meeting of Cabinet, it was agreed that the three year target for 2014-17 for affordable homes be increased from 600 to 850. Members were pleased to note that this figure was greater than elsewhere in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Further good news stories were briefly mentioned, including a total of 52 primary schools in the district becoming signed up to the HONOR Award scheme which would promote the provision of healthy food in primary schools, the continued success of the Empty Homes scheme, and that the target to help 1800 people to achieve independent living was on track.

There was a discussion around Fuel Poverty during which members considered how the Green Deal and other projects were helping to decrease the instances of fuel poverty. The Housing Access and Standards Manager advised that the Council was communicating with private landlords to encourage them to make improvements, where necessary, before new government regulations would come into force in 2017 which would require all privately rented properties comply with more rigid standards.

In response to a member’s question, the Housing Access and Standards Manager agreed that he would obtain figures regarding food bank activity for the district and feed this back to the Committee.

SOUTH NORFOLK HOUSING STRATEGY

The Housing & Public Health Manager provided members with a presentation (appended to these minutes) which detailed the background, progress, successes, aims and priorities of the Council regarding its Housing Strategy. The Committee was advised that the Council intended to consult with its key stakeholders to obtain their views on the draft South Norfolk Council Housing Strategy, included within the agenda.
Members were advised of the strategy’s vision and areas of focus which sought to guide the customer’s journey through life. This journey included having the right supply of housing, being able to access it, maintaining the home and it being safe and warm, and ensuring the housing would support a wider pathway for customers and residents around areas such as health and wellbeing, strong communities and employment and training. The draft Strategy also focussed on support, from the Council and its partners, being in place to provide any necessary intervention at an early stage to ensure that people were able to remain in their own homes.

Members considered the flexibility of the Strategy in relation to the demand for smaller affordable houses due to the implementation of the Spare Room Subsidy, and some concerns were raised that this legislation might change in the future, potentially resulting in a surplus of smaller properties. The Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer reassured the Committee that three bedroomed affordable homes were still being built and that there was some flexibility within Section 106 Agreements to defer the agreement of specific details regarding affordable homes.

Members briefly discussed the trend of developers building new houses with small internal floor areas and considered whether the Council could look into its policies regarding minimum sizes.

The Committee discussed the Council’s involvement with safeguarding and officers advised that, although the lead on safeguarding was taken by the County Council, South Norfolk Council had a role in the protection of children and adults through early intervention work, a collaborative approach through the Early Help Hub, and also in the area of protecting individuals through the taxi licensing process.

The Housing & Public Health Manager suggested that the draft Strategy should be made more explicit regarding dementia and agreed that this addition would be made.

After discussion it was:

RESOLVED:

1. to note the progress on the Housing Strategy with the addition of more detail regarding dementia, as detailed above;

and

2. to approve the Housing Strategy consultation timetable.

EARLY HELP

The Independent Living Team Leader provided members with a brief verbal update regarding the work taking place around Early Help. She advised the Committee that two Community Connectors had been recruited who would be working with vulnerable families and providing them with the signposting, help and support they needed. Members were advised that the Council had secured £90,000 in funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as part of the Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods scheme which would be used to roll out the Early Help approach across the district.
The Housing & Public Health Manager informed members that the Council had been commissioned by Public Health to manage Healthy Community meetings in Diss and Wymondham.

The Early Intervention Manager presented members with two case studies (appended to these minutes) which demonstrated how officers had already put their knowledge into practical use by helping residents to find early assistance to improve their situations.

63 CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU (SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS)

The Housing Access and Standards Manager provided members with a verbal report on the work being done around the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

The Committee was reminded of the background of the existing two year SLAs which had been signed in April 2014 and was advised that a review of the work undertaken by the CABs had taken place. As a result of this review, the Council had brought the SLAs for three CABs in the district, Norwich, Diss and Thetford, and North East Suffolk, into alignment so that they would share the same common aims and good practices. The new SLAs are more outcome based and provide strategic purpose and direction in terms of setting priorities. This approach is being considered across Norfolk. Members were pleased to note that this would result in more openness and transparency in the reporting of the work of the CABs.

64 UPDATE ON THE GREEN DEAL

The Housing Access and Standards Manager gave a brief update on the progress of the Green Deal, advising members that the Council was one third of the way through the project. The Committee was reminded that initially, the Government had stated that all monies were required to be spent or committed by the end of March 2015, but that this had now been extended until 30 September 2015.

Members heard how advertising for the scheme through press releases, WEE events, radio announcements, leafleting and landlord events had taken place and that the Council would continue to promote the project. The Committee also heard that, due to the short notice and limited timeframe in which works were required to be completed, it had been difficult to find trained contractors to carry out the work, but that this issue was currently being resolved.

65 STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (SHMA)

The Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer provided members with an update on the SHMA, which was an assessment vital for the calculation of future housing need and would be used to underpin planning policy. The Committee was advised that the last full research, completed in 2006, was for Greater Norwich and since then had been extended to cover five local authorities; Broadland, Breckland, North Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk. Members were also advised that additional parties involved were Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority. Officers advised that the outcome of the assessment was expected in late spring 2015.
In response to a member’s question, the Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer confirmed that migration was an important factor in the assessment and that the resulting data would include the impact of economic growth on housing need to enable the councils to link the types of employment and housing required to meet the needs of the growing population in the area.

66 THE RIGHT TO BUILD VANGUARD PROJECT

The Project Manager Environment & Housing presented a verbal update on the progress of the Vanguard project, explaining that the Council had now set up a register for people wishing to build their own homes in the district, and that it had received 24 expressions of interest in the scheme, to date. Members were informed that the various comments, requirements and ideas received would be fed into future policy development.

The Committee was advised that the Council was working closely with Saffron Housing on a model for the delivery of affordable houses outside of the development boundary.

In response to a query, the Project Manager stated that following a visit to the Houses of Parliament, he was satisfied that the Right to Build Regulation would come into force and become a part of the housing mix in the future.

67 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DCLG) CONSULTATION – STEPPING ONTO THE PROPERTY LADDER” – ENABLING HIGH QUALITY STARTER HOMES FOR FIRST TIME BUYERS

The Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer presented members with his report which encompassed the Council’s response to a consultation regarding an initiative by the DCLG on the delivery of starter homes, following discussion with the Environment, Regulation and Planning Committee on 26 January 2015.

Members were in agreement with the response and, following a brief discussion, it was: RESOLVED:

     to note the contents of the report.

68 REFUSALS BY HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

Members considered the report of the Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer which detailed the Council’s findings following research undertaken into the reasons for housing associations refusing to offer tenancies to applicants who had bid successfully for properties advertised through Home Options.

The Housing Enabling & Strategy Officer summarised his report, advising the Committee that the Council had concluded that the main reason for the refusals had been affordability and under-occupation as many of the properties had been two bedroomed flats.
It was agreed that officers would explore the issue of why applicants were not found to be unsuitable for properties at an earlier stage in the process and, following a brief discussion, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- to note the contents of the report.

### 69 WORK PLAN FOR 2015

Members noted the draft Work Plan for the Housing and Public Health Policy Committee.

It was noted that the Director of Environment and Housing, Andy Jarvis, would be leaving the employment of the Council in March 2015, and the Chairman wished to formally thank him for his outstanding work and commitment.

### 70 DATE OF NEXT FORMAL MEETING

Members noted the date of the next formal meeting to be held on 29 June 2015, at 10.00am.

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm

-------------------------------------------------
Chairman
South Norfolk Early Help Pathfinder

Customer
Young person, 20 years old, unemployed – support from Wymondham Job Club and The Prince Trust construction course

Issue
- Moved to Diss with his mother and sisters due to domestic violence within the household. They started their new life in Norfolk in sheltered housing and then moved to Wymondham where he now lives
- Found it hard adjusting but quickly settled into primary school and then onto Wymondham High School, he worked very hard but he didn’t get his 5 A-Cs at GCSEs.
- He left school at 16, attended post schools courses but was then put in a difficult dilemma when he was offered a job. He needed the money and so started employment, but had to leave and started signing on. He had been unemployed for 6 months which had really lowered his confidence.
- He attended his local job club which informed him of local Prince’s Trust courses, and in turn signed up for the Taster day for the Get Into Construction course. He immediately knew he wanted a place on the course and impressed the delivery partner and The Trust at Taster day and was offered a place.
- He had always been interested in the Construction industry and this new challenge was just what he needed. He completed the 4 week course and his experience working with Taylor Wimpey gave him a really good insight into the industry and he made some good contacts which may provide future employment opportunities.
- The environment at St Edmunds where the course took place was very supportive and he felt he gained a huge amount of experience in a variety of areas. He felt the course tailored the content at the right level and ensured his confidence grew each day.

Activity
- He now has much more confidence and motivation than before.
- Now working in the local area and has high aspirations to further his career.
- South Norfolk Council’s is investing over £92,000 in supporting young people into work and training. Through Early Help, a more effective collaboration between Department of Work and Pensions, Children’s Services and The Prince’s Trust is enabling vulnerable young people reach their potential, and contribute to the local economy.

So what?
- Cost savings
  Cost of young person staying on Job Seekers Allowance per year = £10,025.
Customer

Young person, 17 years old, not in employment, education or training – support from The Prince Trust get started Robots course.

Issue

- Finished school and completed his GCSE’s
- Faced challenges throughout school with Asperger’s Syndrome and Crohns Disease
- Needed to continue with developing his skills and being around new people to keep him interacted in something positive and hands on. He struggled to understand instructions clearly.

Activity

- As he has Asperger’s Syndrome, we therefore adapted the delivery of the Robots programme to suit his needs. He has always struggled to socially interact with others but through a supportive environment he developed personally by trying new thing and taking small steps, so he could complete the programme.
- He stood out in the group as a hard worker and participated in all the group and team challenges even though he faced many challenges. He achieved completing the programme and being part of a team which was a huge challenge for him.
- He has improved in confidence and presentations skills, meeting new people. His mood lifted during the programme and by his body language and smile on his face he had personally improved during the week.

So what?

- Get Started helped him have a go at being outside of his comfort zone in a safe environment.
- He has now enrolled onto a college course at the Develop Centre through City College in Norfolk, and is being fully supported in a BTEC in Computing.
- His confidence has improved and said he enjoyed the Get Started with Robots programme and meeting new people.
- South Norfolk Council’s is investing over £92,000 in supporting young people into work and training. Through Early Help, a more effective collaboration between Department of Work and Pensions, Children’s Services and The Prince’s Trust is enabling vulnerable young people reach their potential, and contribute to the local economy.

Cost savings

Cost of young person not in Education, Training or Employment per year = £4,528.
Draft South Norfolk Housing Strategy 2015-18

Presentation to members: Housing and Public Health Policy Committee

23rd February 2015
Where are we now

Key Housing successes over the past three years:

• The promotion of an “Investment Ready” district that has enabled housing delivery, created a five-year land supply, supported economic growth, given residents more housing choice and maximised New Homes Bonus revenue for SNC.
• Considering and instigating a new model of delivery through Big Sky to develop mixed residential and commercial property; and to maintain and rent residential property for market lets
• Developing the role of housing and wider services to support the health and wellbeing/public health agendas and having instigated better partnerships and more joined up ways of working – for example through independent living initiatives
• Creating an Early Help pathfinder for Norfolk to ensure that young people and families, and adults receive support from multi-agency partners to maximise their outcomes
• Delivering one of the highest performing homelessness services in the country as evidenced by the Independent Peer Review of the service
The Background

What
South Norfolk Council is the strategic housing authority, therefore we must consider the housing needs of residents across all housing tenures by:

- supporting effective place shaping;
- ensuring delivery of sustainable communities.

Why
SNC is statutorily required to produce a housing strategy. We should be planning our future activity for housing in the district. It’s a vital part of our role which affects all.

Who
We meet our obligations and requirements via various functions across the authority – such as the provision of benefits, building control, homelessness prevention, planning and bringing empty homes back into use.

The strategy is formulated corporately across the authority, and in partnership with key partners.
Progress to date

• Workshop with members at HPHPC
  - political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal issues

• Consultation with staff
  - what activity which feeds into achieving outcomes, how services feed into outcomes, what are the barriers, other comments.

• Why is Housing Significant
  - Corporate perspective

• Draft for consultation with key stakeholders
  - To obtain views of those who we might ask to deliver, or who represent customers
What did we learn about housing?

Its impacts are vast; we are rarely talking about bricks and mortar

Communities, not houses

Sustainability is key; in many ways

- Social
- Environmental
- Economic

It is a hot topic!
South Norfolk has a higher proportion (30% of population) of older people than nationally or generally in Norfolk. This proportion is projected to increase over the next 20 years with the greatest increase being in those aged 75 to 84.

The average house price in South Norfolk is £209,053.

Every £1 spent on housing, £2.41 is generated in the wider economy.

20% of occupiers in South Norfolk are in fuel poverty.

80% of those experiencing delayed transfers from hospital are over 70 years old.

6,525 homes are owned and managed by Registered Housing Providers in South Norfolk. The largest of these is Saffron Housing who acquired all council stock via transfer in 2004.

In January 2014 there were 86 caravans on authorised sites and 7 caravans on unauthorised sites in South Norfolk.

Every home built brings £97,866 into the region and creates 2.1 jobs (CEBR, 2013).

In 2013, 141 homes were adapted via funding from DFGs.

The majority of the properties in poor condition are older properties in the area which are owned by older people who cannot afford to maintain them.

Around 10% of the population aged over 65 is lonely all or most of the time: this equates to approximately 2,650 people in South Norfolk.

Nationally, the average first-time buyer spends £147,000 on their first home, with a 20% deposit of £29,400 and a mortgage worth £117,600.

Positive action was successful in preventing or relieving homelessness in 304 cases in 2013/14.

1,054 properties in South Norfolk do not have central heating.

In 2013, 141 homes were adapted via funding from DFGs.

The majority of the properties in poor condition are older properties in the area which are owned by older people who cannot afford to maintain them.

78% of South Norfolk is Rural.

In 2013, 141 homes were adapted via funding from DFGs.

The majority of the properties in poor condition are older properties in the area which are owned by older people who cannot afford to maintain them.
Links

• Health and Wellbeing
• Community Safety
• Economic Development
• Planning
• Welfare Benefits
• Early Help
Vision and Priority Outcomes

We have looked at housing from a customer perspective, and followed a logical journey:

1. Build the right homes
2. Ensure availability to the right people
3. Ensure that these homes are sustainable
4. Help residents to prosper
What are we planning to do?

For each Priority Outcome:

- What we know
- What will we do to achieve it

HPHPC Feedback
Chance to speak about each of these key areas in turn, we will capture comments/feedback.

- Do you agree?
- Have we missed anything?
- Any other recommendations?
A good supply of market and affordable housing within South Norfolk which meets customer needs and supports growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Activity</th>
<th>Areas of Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Being “Investment Ready”                | • Support an “Investment Ready” culture across the District to support economic growth  
• Ensure the A11 corridor is a successful enterprise zone which seizes on the opportunities of dualling the road, supporting growth in businesses, infrastructure, housing and employment  
• Develop housing initiatives that support the market towns across South Norfolk  
• Ensure new housing developments maximise the chances offered to local people who are accessing employment, education and training.  
• Maximise opportunities of all land in South Norfolk – particularly that which is surplus or underutilised i.e. Promote land supply and maintain a five-year supply of housing land. |
| Enabling Delivery                       | • Promote and deliver affordable housing (which includes First Time Buy), through a range of tenure types, to help meet; and to enable a further healthy future trajectory  
• Investigate how demand for custom build might be met by seeking the availability of serviced plots  
• Deliver an affordable housing grants scheme (through New Homes Bonus) to help deliver affordable homes where financial viability is challenging (the scheme is not set out to meet normal planning obligations).  
• Examine the possibilities of private sector rent within new developments to improve quality and choice for residents  
• Investigate housing need and developing, with partners, appropriate models of supported housing (and housing with care)  
• Develop the concept of Lifetime Homes in the SN to avoid longer term costs of property adaptations and to promote independent living  
• Implement actions following the results of the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment and preparing the SN Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Document to address the specific needs of the group |
| Maximising Existing Housing Stock       | • Following the successful reductions in the overall numbers of empty homes in the District, target the empty homes work to maximise the benefits on local communities and environments. |
| Utilising Council Assets efficiently and effectively | • Delivery of the Big Sky SNC-owned company to develop mixed residential and commercial property; and to maintain and rent residential property for market lets. |
Customers have access to a home that meets their requirements that they can pay for and maintain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Activity</th>
<th>Areas of Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Enabling the appropriate access to housing             | • Develop services that are based on using the benefits of both transformational and transactional customer relationships. This approach can simplify the service for customers with lower level or standard needs and direct more resource to Early Help.  
  • Further develop a more comprehensive support offer to service users that secures outcomes wider than housing ones e.g. Early Help, Enhanced Housing Options Toolkit, Handyperson Services, Employment and Benefits support  
  • Offer advice to residents/potential residents which enables access across all tenure types, and embed this advice to benefit local businesses – and promote these services, especially to those residents in need but not currently known to SNC and partners  
  • Enhance our approach to housing and give wider advice through the tools provided to us through the national Gold Standard for Homelessness services |
| Ensuring residents can pay for their home and manage their finances | • Provide opportunities to Housing Register applicants and recipients of housing options advice to take part in training and support which gets them “Tenancy Ready”  
  • Support and encourage residents to maintain financial independence, through advice on employment, housing and welfare benefits, and council tax support |
| Enabling residents to manage their own home            | • Explore our options to offer tenancy awareness sessions to both existing and future residents  
  • Ensure the right support is provided at the right time through Early Help  
  • Work with partners and gypsy and traveller communities to ensure gypsies and travellers have suitable provision and quality of life within communities and within a culture of rights and responsibilities. |
Customers live in warm, decent and safe homes within a strong community, and when needed they receive support to help them achieve independent living in their own home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Activity</th>
<th>Areas of Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Achieving Independent Living | - Enhance independent living and support to vulnerable residents to reduce avoidable hospital admissions by ensuring homes are suitable to meet residents’ needs through joint working and funding with partners  
- Help to reduce the delay to patients leaving hospital through appropriate Handyperson services  
- Work with Norfolk County Council and other partners to ensure the changes to Supporting People funding have the best possible impact on South Norfolk residents in terms of support arrangements  
- Enhance the support for people (1) with mental health issues and (2) who can benefit from an Early Help approach by developing a project that utilises the opportunities from Care Farms  
- Support adults and vulnerable people referred by Early Help partners to achieve independent living.  
- Undertake greater profiling of savings achieved through Early Help  
- Dependent on the outcomes of the bid: working with Orwell to develop additional accommodation provision for victims of domestic abuse, including move on accommodation to support customers with reintegration into communities and to achieve independent living.  
- Develop independent living to achieve better interventions for people with dementia including raising awareness, partner understanding and community working. |
| Creating Affordable Warmth | - Make homes more energy efficient by providing information and advice, and offering means tested/targeted loans and other support (including access to external funding) to help local residents to live in affordable warmth  
- Reduce Excess Winter Deaths through targeted promotional campaigns in high risk areas to help support older and vulnerable residents, and (through the multi-agency focus group) establishing a three-year plan with partners.  
- Review the financial assistance provided (for example through loans, grants and other support) to ensure residents without the required resources are able to live in affordable warmth |
| Enabling Decent and Safe Homes in Strong Communities | - Manage and maintain intelligence on condition of the housing stock  
- Improve the quality of housing across all tenures by ensuring it meets legal standards, does not cause nuisance and does not present unacceptable risks to health.  
- Develop a training and support programme for private sector landlords to help them undertake their responsibilities and encourage their continued input into the sector as partners with SNC.  
- Work with partners to prevent and manage the effects of antisocial behaviour on our local communities. |
Customers receive easily accessible advice and support which improves the life changes of them and their families, and which targets those households needing early interventions and support to get the most out of life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Activity</th>
<th>Areas of Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Maximising the opportunities of Early Help             | • Maximise the housing contribution of all partners to the Early Help Pathfinder project. The district collaboration hub provides multi-agency working which is transforming the approach of services that deliver help and improved outcomes for residents and communities.  
  • Ensure the role of Councils and partners in delivering low cost early prevention work and thereby avoiding later high cost reactive work is recognised and maximised.  
  • Develop a community-led project which combats the negative effects of loneliness through volunteering  
  • Provide an appropriate range of temporary accommodation for homeless households – whilst maintaining an emphasis on keeping numbers of those accessing it as low as possible through early intervention work and ensuring good move-on arrangements |
| Working collaboratively to secure wider outcomes (on health and wellbeing and early interventions; economic growth; and communities) | • Contribute to the countywide review of SLAs with the Citizens Advice Bureaux to ensure the support they provide reflects the needs of customers and the strategic priorities of funding providers.  
  • Review all SLAs to ensure they deliver strategically relevant outcomes  
  • Work with partners to agree a Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy that places greater emphasis on wider outcomes and moves from prevention to early interventions.  
  • Develop the Care and Repair Service to achieve greater input from community groups, the voluntary sectors and local volunteers  
  • Prioritise partnership working that help secure outcomes |
| Delivery of Safeguarding arrangements                  | • Deliver a Designated Safeguarding Officer Group and review the SNC policy in line with changing national and local agendas and requirements  
  • Support local strategic and operational joint working on safeguarding and the raft of related subjects |
For Consideration

- Do you agree with the issues, achievements and suggested priorities?

- Have we missed anything?

- Any other recommendations?